



The City of Dothan

Department of Planning and Development

Todd L. McDonald, AICP
Director

P. O. BOX 2128
DOTHAN, ALABAMA 36302
334-615-4410 (o) · 334-615-4419 (f)
www.dothan.org

Yvette Thomas
Principal Planner

Craig Walden
Building Official

Kim Vann
Business Svc. Manager

Keeping Backyard Poultry in Dothan

An increasing number of people around the country are choosing to keep live poultry, such as chickens or ducks, as part of a greener, healthier lifestyle. While you enjoy the benefits of backyard chickens and other poultry, it is important to consider the risk of illness, especially for children, which can result from handling live poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam.

What is the risk of getting *Salmonella* from live poultry?

It's common for chickens, ducks, and other poultry to carry *Salmonella*. *Salmonella* is a type of germ that naturally lives in the intestines of poultry and many other animals. Even organically fed poultry can have *Salmonella*. While it usually doesn't make the birds sick, *Salmonella* can cause serious illness when it is passed to people.

Check out the questions and answers below for more information on *Salmonella* infection and how to prevent getting germs from live poultry. You may also get more information by talking to your health care provider or your animal's veterinarian.

Gastrointestinal (Enteric) Diseases from Animals

Check out CDC's [Gastrointestinal \(Enteric\) Diseases from Animals](#) website, your one-stop-shop for information about zoonotic outbreaks, prevention messages, and helpful resources.

How do people get *Salmonella* infections from live poultry?

Live poultry may have *Salmonella* germs in their droppings and on their bodies (feathers, feet, and beaks) even when they appear healthy and clean. The germs can also get on cages, coops, feed and water dishes, hay, plants, and soil in the area where the birds live and roam. Additionally, the germs can be found on the hands, shoes, and clothing of those who handle the birds or work or play where they live and roam.

People become infected with *Salmonella* when they put their hands or other things that have been in contact with feces in or around their mouth. Young children are especially at risk for illness because their immune systems are still developing and because they are more likely than others to put their fingers or other items into their mouths. It is important to wash hands immediately after touching poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam, because the germs on your hands can easily spread to other people or things.

How do I reduce the risk of a *Salmonella* infection from live poultry?

- DO

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.
- Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.
- Wash hands after removing soiled clothes and shoes.
 - If you collect eggs from the hens, thoroughly cook them, as *Salmonella* can pass from healthy looking hens into the interior of normal looking eggs.
 - Clean any equipment or materials associated with raising or caring for live poultry outside the house, such as cages or feed or water containers.
 - If you have free-roaming live poultry, assume where they live and roam is contaminated
- **DON'T**
 - Don't let children younger than 5 years of age, older adults, or people with weak immune systems handle or touch chicks, ducklings, or other live poultry.
 - Don't eat or drink in the area where the birds live or roam.
 - Don't let live poultry inside the house, in bathrooms, or especially in areas where food or drink is prepared, served, or stored, such as kitchens or outdoor patios.
 - In recent outbreaks of *Salmonella* infections linked to contact with live poultry, ill people reported bringing live poultry into their homes.

What are the signs, symptoms, and types of treatment available for *Salmonella* infections?

Salmonella can make people sick with

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Abdominal cramps

Sometimes, people can become so sick from a *Salmonella* infection that they have to go to the hospital. Children under the age of 5 years, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems, including pregnant women, are more likely to have a serious illness. When severe infection occurs, *Salmonella* may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other body sites and can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics.

You can learn more about the signs, symptoms and treatment of *Salmonella* infection by visiting the [CDC's *Salmonella* website](#). If you suspect you or your child has *Salmonella* infection, please contact your health care provider immediately.

Are there any policies about owning live poultry?

Rules and regulations vary by city, county, and state, so check with your local government to determine rules and regulations about owning live poultry. In Dothan, Special Exception approval from the Board of Zoning Adjustment is required. To avoid impacting neighboring residential properties, a minimum of ½ acre (21,780 sq. ft) is also required. Enclosures (chicken coop) are required and it must be a minimum of 35 ft. from the residence of any other person, church, school, public building, park or public playground. For the protection of the public health, anyone who keeps any fowl within the city shall maintain the premises where any such animal or fowl is kept in a sanitary condition to prevent the hatching of fly or insect larvae or any offensive odors.